*Social Security 80 Years –
Celebrating the Past and
Building the Future*

August 14, 2015

Celebrating
SOCIAL SECURITY
ADMINISTRATION
80 years
1935–2015

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Celebrating 80 Years of Technology & Innovation

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Chief Information Officer's Message

On August 14, 2015, the Social Security Administration will celebrate 80 years of service to the American public. I am honored to share this groundbreaking milestone with my colleagues here at Headquarters, in our Field Offices, our TeleService Centers, state Disability Determination Services, our Regional Offices, and with U.S. citizens throughout the world. This special release, *Celebrating 80 Years of Technology and Innovation*, is a memoir of the advancements made by Social Security employees in implementing technology throughout the decades.

Since the signing of the Social Security Act by President Franklin D. Roosevelt on August 14, 1935, our mission has been to provide for the general welfare of the American public by ensuring benefits are paid accurately and on time. Over the decades we grew to administer countless other programs and services to the American public including Medicare, Disability, and the Supplemental Security Income programs (SSI). Always in the forefront, leading the way, always creating better ways to serve the public, we were the first federal agency to manage the records of the United States public at large. What began as a manual, pen and paper process evolved to punch cards, then to magnetic tape, keyboards, and dot matrix printers. Green screens eventually replaced typewriters.

Today, many of our employees carry out their duties at alternate duty stations, an advancement which ensures continuity of operations, reduces air pollution and costs to the taxpayers, and ensures retention of talented and dedicated employees. We now offer the public the means to file claims and report changes to their personal records online via their desktop or laptop computers. In addition, people receiving SSI can now use a mobile app on their smartphones to report their wages, thereby reducing improper payments.

To demonstrate our commitment to our ongoing modernization, Acting Commissioner Colvin appointed John Morenz as our Chief Technology Officer. John will take the lead in introducing the next wave of innovative technologies.

During my years in private industry, I was surrounded by the best and brightest and I am pleased to say the same is true at SSA. Each day, dedicated employees work tirelessly to design IT solutions to address the evolving needs of the American public. I am inspired by the level of expertise and hard work I witness each day as I dive deeper into Social Security policies and the processes established to address them. We employ over 3,500 IT professionals, many of whom have extremely complicated analyst positions and carry out their duties to produce quality results amidst political and funding changes, shifting priorities, often within very tight deadlines.

Thank you for celebrating this historic milestone with us. And thank you for taking the time to read the stories of those whose mission it is to ensure the ongoing success of the Social Security programs, and the health and welfare of all U.S. citizens.

Rob Klopp
Deputy Commissioner for Systems and
Chief Information Officer
Social Security Administration

Chief Technology Officer's Message

"Ultimately, this Strategy will ensure that agencies use emerging technologies to serve the public as effectively as possible. . . As a Government, and as a trusted provider of services we must never forget who our customers are. . . the American people."

President Barack Obama
Building a 21st Century Digital Government

In May 2013, the Federal Chief Information Officer released a document titled Building a 21st Century Platform to Better Serve the American People, a strategy to enable more efficient and coordinated digital services. To fulfill this strategy, we must build upon the foundation already set in place over the many years of our history.

The 80th anniversary of the Social Security Act comes at an exciting and dynamic time in US history. As the Agency Chief Technology Officer (CTO), I oversee the work of enterprise architects, database architects, and countless other advanced technology professionals. I am also part of a new SSA Digital Service team associated with the White House U.S. Digital Service team. Our Digital Service Team will work to find solutions to management challenges that can prevent progress in Information Technology (IT) service delivery.

In my role as CTO, I bring a unique perspective and keep my finger on the pulse of enterprise-wide initiatives such as data warehousing, service-oriented architecture, agile development, and technical debt reduction programs. I also lead the charge toward expanding Cloud Computing and Predictive Analytics technologies.

As an established member of the Social Security management team, I am grateful to those with whom I collaborate each day. The complexity and number of changes that occur within our integrated network of systems is daunting. Nevertheless, I am confident that our team has not only the skill and dedication, but the tenacity and cultural savvy to make it happen efficiently and effectively.

With the thoughtful and well-crafted strategic planning of countless dedicated employees, we seamlessly introduce state-of-the-art solutions. These solutions continuously address the demands of an ever-increasing, diverse population, and an ever-evolving technological culture; a tradition we are committed to continue. As you read the reflections of our employees, you will also note a common thread of altruism, which was in the forefront when they chose to work for us. It "sealed the deal" for many, and their commitment has grown even stronger throughout their career.

Each day more and more people are turning to our online services to conduct business with us, and it is with great pride and pleasure that I welcome you to browse the following pages showing the path we travelled to get to this place in our history of service to the public. Our employees genuinely enjoy their work and take pride in what they do each day; and it shows.

I congratulate the hard-working men and women of the Social Security Administration and I am proud to be a part of the continued success of this great agency.

John Morenz
Chief Technology Officer,
Social Security Administration

First Decades...

30's, 40's, 50's

On August 4, 1935, President Franklin D Roosevelt signed the Social Security Act. Federal Insurance Contributions Act, or FICA, taxes were first collected in 1937 at a rate of 1 percent. Today, the total tax rate is 15.3 percent, with the employer supplementing half of it. To provide workspace for this organization, our government identified a building in Baltimore, Maryland that was originally built and designed by the Coca-Cola Company for their headquarters. It was known as the Candler building and in 1936 it became the new headquarters for our fledgling agency.

As workers signed up for this new benefit program records had to be kept on each individual. Critical information was transferred to punch cards called earning cards, at the rate of 30 million new cards each quarter. Individual index strips identified each person using a unique number which became known as the social security number. This entire process was totally manual and very labor-intensive.
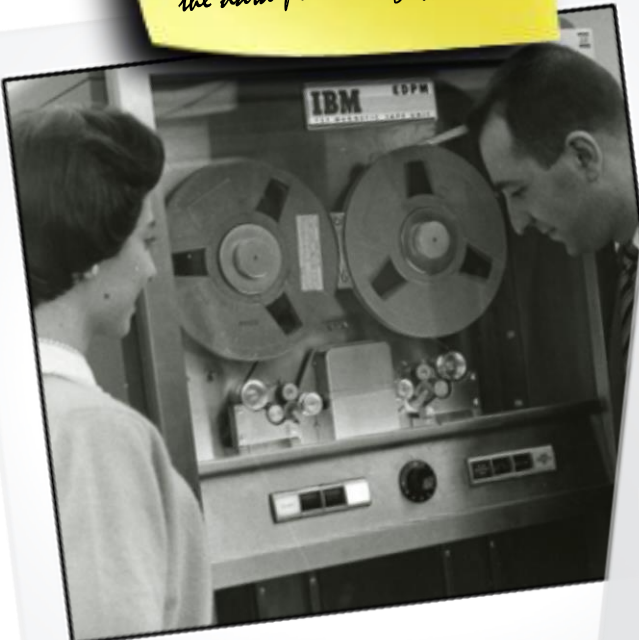
The first benefit check was issued January 31, 1940, in the amount of $22.54 and was paid to Ms. Ida Mae Fuller. In the early 1950's we became the first government agency to use computers to manage these records. These computers were made of relays and vacuum tubes and took up multiple rooms to store and operate. We purchased three of these IBM 705 computer consoles for $788,000 each and ran them for 16 hours a day. They could only be run 16 hours because of all the heat generated by the array of vacuum tubes.

To take advantage of our new computers' ability to use magnetic tape as data input, we began the process of transferring 100 million punch cards to magnetic tape. This process began in September 1955.

These pictures show the migration from punch cards through microfiche to computer tape; each a huge step forward in automating the data processing effort.

60's, 70's

Age of Aquarius...

In January 1960, work was completed on the new Woodlawn, Maryland headquarters for the Social Security Administration. At that time, 1,500 workers moved from the Candler building in downtown Baltimore to our new Woodlawn complex. In the 1960's, we built one of the first online systems where multiple computers could talk to each other electronically. By the late 1960's, we again went to the IBM Corporation and purchased their new IBM 360/65 computer systems as well as a few UNIVAC 1108s.

By the 1970's, we amassed over 600,000 reels of magnetic computer tape to house our records. We had to think about modernizing this approach to storing and processing our records. The modernization effort was initiated to transfer all of these computer tapes to hard disk drives. This was a process just like our first punch card to tape conversion.
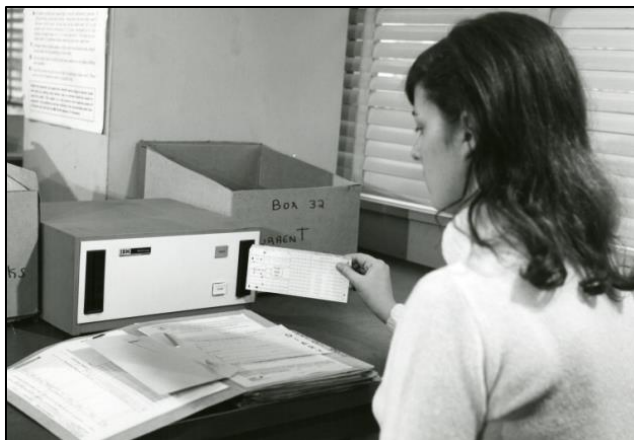
At this time, our master beneficiary record consisted of over 2000 reels of magnetic tape containing 172 million records. In 1973, legislation was passed creating Title XVI, the SSI program. We were designated to implement that program in January 1974. To implement the SSI program, we had to procure new hardware and write new computer programs to facilitate processing the additional workload.

As I remember…

Edith Keeney
Retired

I started out my career at SSA as a Claims Rep in a Michigan field office in 1962. Whenever someone came into the office and presented a claim, we had to request their earnings history to establish eligibility. That required writing a formal letter of request and mailing it out. We would then wait for a reply.

Typically, this reply could take one or two weeks to be returned. We couldn't process the claim without this information.

I moved to the Central Office in 1967 on a detail assignment and worked as an analyst. This move became permanent and I spent the remainder of my career at Woodlawn helping to automate those old manual processes.

(Editor's Note: It now takes just milliseconds to process some online transactions to retrieve this information, and worse case, overnight to obtain it via a batch processing run.)

As I remember…

Ryan Middleton
Team Lead, Systems Media/Comm, Office of Systems

I started my career at SSA in May 1990 as a participant in the Stay-in-School Program. I worked in the Office of Systems Design and Development while attending Towson State University. The Stay-in-School Program allowed me to work part-time while attending college on a full-time basis and full-time during vacation periods.

I became a full-time Office of Systems employee upon graduation in January of 1993. Systems has been my "home" since. Back then, (1990 – 1993) I assisted two Management Analysts in what was called the "control room". In the control room, we were responsible for tracking and monitoring technical work assignments with short turnaround dates. The control room was a separate location next to the OSDD Front Office. It was about 10'x 10', and it contained several file cabinets, three desks and three employees.

We used floppy disks to store and transport documents, huge CRT monitors and IWS/LAN PCs with processing power slower than today's average smartphone. Today, we collect and manage the records of over 319 million people, including infants we enumerate at birth and the records of every wage earner in the nation. Wow, we have come a long way!

As I remember. . .

Rick Warsinskey
District Manager,
Cleveland, OH

We have always been an agency that promotes high quality public service. At the same time, we also embrace advances in technology and innovation. Technology and user-friendly electronic services are necessary to improve efficiency, enhance public service, and accommodate never-ending change.

When I began my career as a Claims Representative (CR), we had one clerical employee for every two CRs. The data review technician (DRT) prepared manual paper requests for workers' earning records from paper claims using a Form 450, while a 450S was prepared for SSI claims. A teletypist would type in Earnings Record requests and all SSI rejects came back for correction on paper. CRs performed highly complex manual computations and then instructed the DRT to type a paper award form, which the CRs were required to authorize and sign.

Workloads were controlled by the District Office Workload Report and color-coded flex strips and clericals would bring aging claims to the CR's' attention. In 1977 we implemented the Claims Automated Processing System. This technology enabled us to process retirement and survivors' claims without preparing manual 101's, reducing the time for a claimant to receive a check by about four weeks. Disability claims, taken on paper, were transmitted to the DDSs and the folder was mailed to the DDS. All communications with the regional office and area directors' offices were by mail. Today, those teletypist, clerical, and DRT positions are extinct in our field offices. Headquarters first received electronic typewriters with word processing abilities around 1980 and FAX machines about 1984.

No one could envision the changes technology would bring to the agency. Yesterday our mailrooms were stacked high with folders and paper mail; today emails stack our inboxes. And now we have Internet claims. The public expects work to be processed immediately. Telework is coming to the field, but we will always need human interaction in a field office.

As a District Manager I try to balance service, but I also train my staff in how to treat people. My staff is multi-generational, multi-racial, and diverse in age. They understand the importance of service and the importance of respecting the public in a kind and humane manner. We have learned to embrace all the changes in technology, but we must also stick to our principles to provide the service the public needs whether it is in person, by phone or on the Internet.

We take possession of our first desktop PCs in the 80s, and our first laptop a decade later.
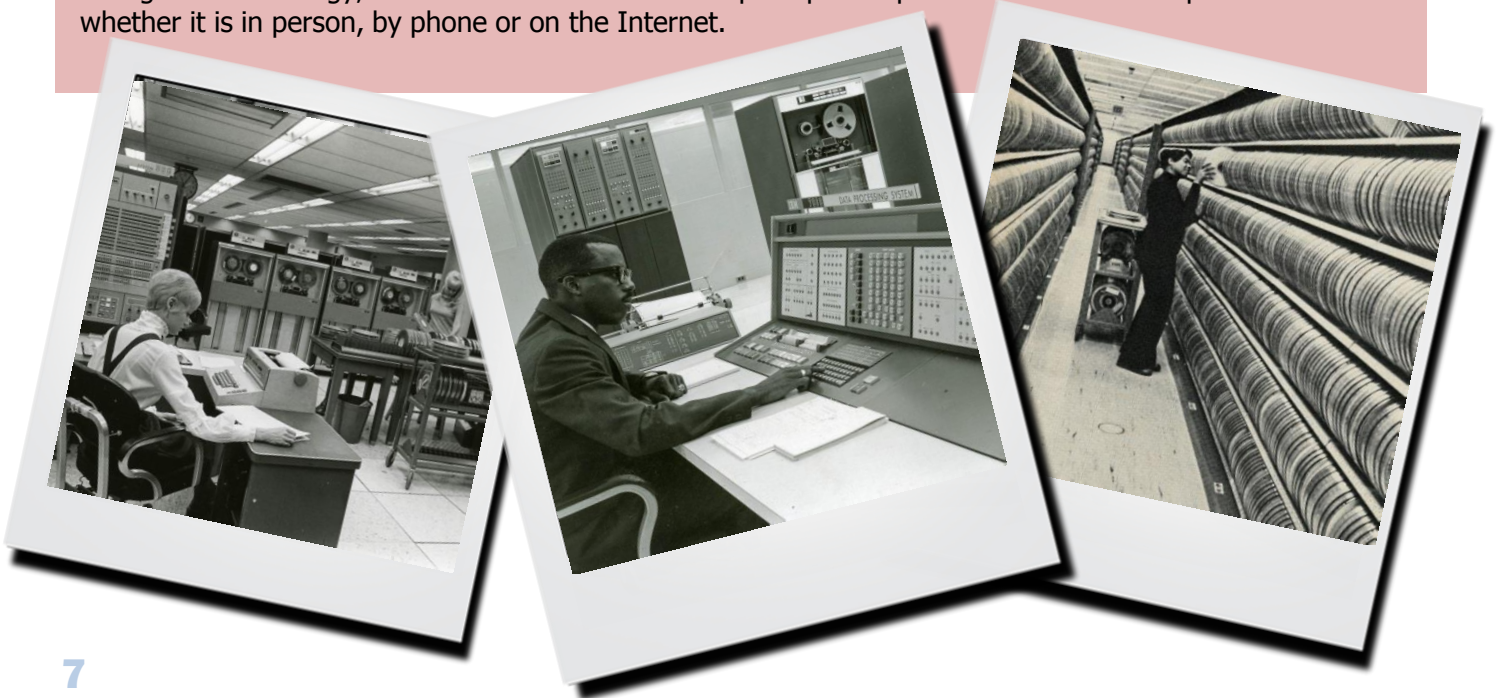
'Boomers & Gen X-ers…

80's, 90's

As I remember…

Paula Eisengrein
Executive Officer
HQ, DCO OTS

I took the PACE exam while I was still in college. Upon graduation I was selected as a Fulbright Scholar and studied in Germany for two years, when I was offered a job as a Claims Representative (CR) with SSA - I accepted and, in October 1979, I began my SSA career. I completed CRT training in the Jamaica, NY field office and eagerly began to use my language skills in Spanish, Russian, and German, interviewing the public. I also worked as a CR in Puerto Rico. We did not have the automated appointments or a Visitor Intake Process system in field offices - there were also no guards in our offices. People walked into offices and were greeted by a receptionist at a counter. The receptionist determined the purpose of their visit, wrote the visitor's name on "pink slips", escorted them to the interviewer's desk and introduced them. If it was someone "on the rolls" she might locate their record on a microfiche. It was up to the receptionist to evenly distribute the interviews to the CRs to take claims, or to the service representatives to answer questions, to change an address, or help someone missing a check.

I became a supervisor, manager and also worked in the regional office before coming to headquarters. Looking back, working as a CR was one of the most gratifying experiences of my career - people came to our SSA office because of major and traumatic life events (a death in the family, a disability) or to file for retirement benefits. Technology has changed how we operate - what used to take weeks to generate a benefit check, now takes 7 days - but technology hasn't changed our commitment to serving the public.

In 1980, we moved into our dedicated computing facility located adjacent to our Woodlawn complex. This building was designed to house computer systems and their attendant operating support. Here we added tape silos (as shown on the left) containing hundreds of three inch square tape cartridges, each able to contain the equivalent of 5 million of our original punch cards. By 1982, our computer systems were running 12 million lines of code, consisting of about 6,000 COBOL programs, 1,500 assembly language programs, and another 1,000 programs using miscellaneous languages.

In October 1988, we implemented our 800 number telephone service, allowing people to contact us directly with questions or information.

As I remember…

Patrice Stewart
Deputy Associate
Commissioner, DCO
Office of Electronic
Services & Technology

My career with SSA began just two weeks after I graduated from Wesleyan College in Macon, GA. I was hired as an Outstanding Scholar and began working as a Title II Claims Representative in the local Macon, GA SSA field office. As a Communication's Major, I felt right at home administering agency policy, interviewing and interacting with claimants and my fellow workers in a government office. Most importantly, I embraced what I call the "human factor" of our agency, working hard to make a real difference in the lives of people that I spoke with every day; often meeting them at some of the most critical times in their lives. After working six years as a CR, I began my career in headquarters when I was selected for a detail to conduct Interactive Video Teletraining for Title XVI CRs, who specialized in taking and processing SSI claims, but had no Title II experience. Working in headquarters was such a positive experience that I decided to stay and take an assignment in the Office of Systems, where I spent the next 16 years in service to the agency.

I took advantage of many analyst courses and training opportunities provided by the agency in order to develop my analyst skills. These courses and my time in Systems gave me a better understanding of how application development and the use of automation plays such a critical role in improving the services administered by our front-line employees and being offered to the public. It was an eye opener and gave me a different perspective.

When I worked as a CR in the Macon field office, I was able to make a difference in the lives of the public one person at a time. In my role today, I strive to make a difference in the lives of the SSA employees and the public across the nation. I believe for each of us, the work we do changes our outlook on life. For me, the longer I work for the SSA, the stronger my commitment is to a far broader reach to the "human factor" through technological advancement. With technology, we can help our front line employees perform their jobs more effectively and efficiently. Our job is to accurately assess where we are going as an agency, ensure the latest and most efficient technology is available, and provide quality training to help our staff meet the needs of the American public. When I speak with our front line employees about automation and online services, I focus on how we can increase our employees' productivity through automation and the different ways that the public expects to do business with the SSA. For me, being in a role of advancing technology in the agency is a privilege as much as an obligation to our front line employees and the public.

As I remember. . .
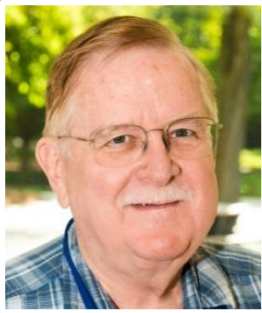
John Davidson
- Retired -

I took the Civil Service Entrance Exam in 1972 with no experience in this new field of Information Technology. However, the agency offered me a Programmer Trainee Position and trained me to be a COBOL programmer. Title XVI had just been signed into law and I was assigned a support programming role. Since we had only a very short time to accomplish the legislative mandate to be active January 1974, we found the coding and testing process very burdensome.

We would provide the handwritten coding instruction on a form to the key-punch staff. They would punch IBM cards with the coding interpreted into machine readable punch code and return the card decks to the programmer.

Then you would feed those card decks into a computer front end, it would compile the code into a running computer program and attempt to execute that code.

In the meantime you had to develop test data to run against the program to make sure it was working properly, then run tests and finally if all went well the program would be released for production. This was such a laborious and time-consuming process that we used to have a phrase to make it usable; "If it runs, it's production. . . If it doesn't, it's a test."

The Net Generation...

2000's

With Y2K in the rear view mirror, our next ten years saw the growth of video, voice, on-line service, end user computing, and a renewed focus on IT security. Our increased use of the Internet provided the public with greater access to services and allowed us to more efficiently reach them. However, this also raised far-reaching questions about security, safety, and privacy. In 2009, we formalized the position of our Chief Information Security Officer and made it an executive level position, recognizing that our IT security required not just a commitment but visibility throughout every program and part of the agency.

Mobile SSA

On August 16, 2013, we released a new design for our public facing web site. The impetus behind this design was a reflection of the growing use of mobile devices for browsing our website. Since 2013 we have seen a steady increase in mobile traffic. Based on this increased use, our new design laid the foundation for mobile technologies using a technique called Responsive Web Design. The idea is simple - make it so that the content on your website can adapt to the various screen sizes of the devices people are using to browse the web today. These screen sizes include smartphones, tablets, laptops, and desktops.

National Support Center Replacement

We built a new energy efficient data center called the National Support Center (NSC) in Urbana, Maryland; NSC Construction was completed in September 2014. Our new facility dramatically increases our computing power, while reducing our energy consumption and power costs. Our NSC is a stand-alone facility that requires minimal staffing. To heat the building, we use white space heat recovery by capturing heat generated by computer servers.

Cloud Computing

In the coming years, we will expand a hybrid cloud service environment to meet citizen and business needs. We will establish a strategy to ensure that this environment is considered first for all technology projects and provide a new digital environment optimized for agile development. We are planning to build this environment around three services; Software as a Service (SaaS), Platform as a Service (PaaS), and Infrastructure as a Service (IaaS).

As I remember. . .

Eric Williamson
Team Lead, DTS
DCO OEST

My career with SSA began in June 2002 after I graduated from Connecticut College in New London, CT. At the time I was feeling stressed about "life after school", so I attended a job fair held by my college. At first, nothing really spoke to me; but my conversation with SSA representatives piqued my interest. They explained how the agency helps people by working to determine what benefits they are entitled to. I was impressed, and found myself increasingly drawn to a career where I could help others. Long story short, I accepted the offer and began working in the New London, CT district office as a bilingual claims representative (Spanish). My plans to attend law school never materialized because I soon became very committed to my job with SSA. What I expected to last only one year turned into a very long, rewarding career.

I remember my days as a claims rep, taking claims from people over the telephone or in person. Now, through technology, people have the option to file online instead of driving to an office. People no longer need to search for a parking space, or wait for a bus. Visitors now use the Visitor Intake Process system to explain the reason for their visit, as opposed to walking up to a window and speaking with a receptionist. As a result, waiting time is reduced and business is expedited. More and more, people use technology and the Internet to communicate, pay bills, and bank online. Personal health records are also stored online, so we must remain open to and proactive about emerging technology that will help us to do our jobs quickly and with the highest level of security.

I served as an Operations Supervisor in New Haven, CT in 2005; as District Manager in Middletown, CT in 2008; I am now a Team Lead in the Office of Electronic Services and Technology where I work with ODD's Capacity Team. Our agency is making great strides to face the challenge of keeping up with technology and the demands of the public. Throughout my SSA career in the field I always reinforced to employees that our service to the public – helping those most in need – is an honor and a privilege.

Dynamite Award

On February 5, 2015, at the 2015 American Council for Technology – Industry Advisory Council (ACT-IAC) Igniting Innovations Showcase, ACT-IAC selected our Audit Trail System Team for the Dynamite Award titled "Reduce – Reuse – Recycle". ACT-IAC is a non-profit, public-private partnership dedicated to improving government through the application of IT. Each year ACT-IAC recognizes the "best of the best" of innovative products, services, processes, and solutions.

Citizen Access Routing Enterprise (CARE) 2020

Our transition to an IP-based call center solution was a natural progression for us. The deployment of our CARE 2020 contact call center solution allows us the flexibility to meet increased demands and add new communication technologies and services, such as Web Callback, "Click to Talk", Web Collaboration, and Web Chat. In addition, CARE 2020 enabled us to implement an enhanced reporting system that incorporates data from multiple sources and real-time network indicators, helping us identify and improve citizen interaction.

Telephone Systems Replacement

Our Telephone Systems Replacement Project replaced our Private Branch eXchange (PBX) telephony systems with an Enterprise Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP) telephony solution, to support current and future requirements and the transition to Internet Protocol (IP) Telephony. Our PBX systems had significant limitations that impacted productivity, efficiency, and cost in completing our mission. Additionally, we had concerns about the technical support for the existing PBX systems.

As I remember...

Li-Ming Koo
Senior Technical Advisor, Division of Security Policy and PII, Office of Systems

I became a fellow Federal employee back in the mid 80's. I was an external hire with a computer science degree and industry management work experience and hired to work as a systems analyst in the Office of Systems, Office of Information Management. Many people are not aware SSA became one of the earliest adopters of computer technology when the agency selected IBM to handle electronic processing of wage reporting, using cardpunch, sorting and accounting machines and electronic collators. In 1956, we brought our first real computers online to post the earnings of workers on magnetic tape and correct any earnings that were reported incorrectly. We were truly a federal agency ahead our time.

From the day I was hired, I eagerly embraced the awesome agency mission - a mission for social good. Every day, I looked forward to the exciting challenge of working with the massive volume and complexity of data in the Social Security Administration, working in the Office of Systems, Office of Information Management.

My very first assignment was helping our internal SSA customers at the Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania data and docket center. I wrote computer programs that could generate folder control barcodes with wand readers/scanners to automate folder storage and retrieval. Later, I worked as a software project lead for former Commissioner Dorcas Hardy's initiative to generate the Personal Earnings and Benefit Estimate Statement to educate the public about their accounts.

After that, I led the planning, development and implementation of automation efforts for the hearings and appeals workload nation-wide. I established IT strategy, tactical plans, companion operational plans, and support processes.

Today, in my role as an agency professional, as well as my interest as a taxpayer, I am very pleased and honored to participate in our agency's vision, strategic development, tactical planning, and operational implementation efforts that provide quality public service.

Going Forward...

"Our challenge is to embrace technological enhancements to achieve efficiency without sacrificing the personal service for which we are known."

Acting Commissioner Carolyn Colvin

Few government agencies continue to touch as many lives as we do. Our customers reflect the full diversity of the American public in age, education, income, ethnicity, race, and ability. We know the world is changing and we must change with it in order to continue to serve with distinction. While our founding principles and values will not change, the way we operate and serve must keep up with the times.

As we look forward, we see great challenges. Disability and retirement waves, an aging employee base and increased turnover, technological advancements, fiscal constraints, and increased customer expectations present an unprecedented opportunity for bold change, innovation, and vision.

One of our priority goals is to improve access to our services by increasing the number of people who complete their business with us online. To advance this goal, we continue to develop the my Social Security portal as a secure, online account where people can view and manage their own personal information.

This year, for the first time, we made it possible for people to use their personal my Social Security account to get an immediate online replacement SSA-1099 or SSA-1042 for the tax season, and to apply for appeals of our decisions. We also plan to add the ability to request a replacement social security card and a click-to-talk feature on our website. This will improve the way the public receives information, services and benefits. Therefore, it is crucial that we invest in technology to expand our services to the public and improve public satisfaction.

2025...

Potential Threats and Opportunities

Rapid advances in technology will introduce new opportunities to serve our customers, while requiring us to remain vigilant about potential security and fraud vulnerabilities.

Budget Uncertainty

Federal budgets will continue to be constrained, which will challenge us to be innovative, efficient, and effective advocates for the resources needed to deliver the Social Security services that Americans have earned and paid for.

Opportunity

The next decade opens up many exciting new opportunities for us to explore and incorporate new technologies and to expand our service delivery channels using innovative new IT solutions. These solutions and advances will provide the baseline framework upon which to move our service to the American public in more efficient and secure directions.

Infrastructure Alignment and Collaboration

We will align our physical infrastructure and workforce distribution to the current environment, as we keep up with evolving technologies and our customers' needs for our continuing community presence. Our current physical assets and workforce distribution across the field office, DDS, hearing office, and headquarters landscape will be continuously improved as we realize our vision to provide customer choice. We will invest in appropriate infrastructure, technology, and capabilities to meet customer needs. We will also increase collaboration across state and federal agencies to improve customer service and capitalize on existing facilities planning resources.

The Path Beyond 2025: Our Enablers

We will make informed, strategic choices regarding IT to create seamlessly integrated systems across all levels of the organization, increasing accessibility, accuracy, and ease of use. We will institute a more agile approach to implementing technology, resulting in faster development cycle time. Through the creation of a network of integrated internal systems, we will operate as a unified organization, sharing information and using data across service areas and teams. Our investment approach will reflect prioritization of our current and emerging business needs, while we evaluate our current portfolio of IT projects against the capabilities defined in our Vision 2025 strategy. We will then develop a plan and investment strategy for our path forward.

As I remember…

Shirley W. Taylor
District Manager,
Alhambra, CA

After graduating from Elizabeth City State University in North Carolina, a Historically Black College and University (HBCU) I was recruited by SSA as an Outstanding Scholar during an HBCU job fair. On July 11, 1971, I reported to a Claims Representative (CRT) training class in Hartford, CT. It was a two-month, rigorous, intensive, but rewarding experience. I was just looking for a job, because I was tired of being a poor student and my intention was to work only one year for Social Security and then move on. However, after CRT training, my intention changed. I knew then I wanted to work for SSA and provide the public deserved benefits and excellent service with pride. My first duty station was in Lynn, MA. known as the "Old Shoe Town" because it was the home of the American shoe industry in the early-19th century. My first manager was the late Joseph P. Collins, the First President of the National Council of Social Security Management Associations.

I worked in Lynn until 1974, when I transferred to the Broadway Vernon office, now the University Village office in Los Angeles, CA. I quickly realized I was the only "journeyman" CR (completed the 3-year career ladder position) in the entire office, and suddenly my "job" became a demanding career. I was the only CR in the office to adjudicate claims without review – I was adjudicating over one hundred claims and post entitlement workload actions every week, certifying awards, resulting in hundreds of thousands of dollars in payments to claimants. Back then, we could almost predict "high traffic" days - usually after a holiday. We always suspected family discussions about social security as they congregated around the dinner table prompted an increase in foot traffic and telephone calls to our office. Today our teleservice center representatives handle most of these calls, and our online service features, including *my* Social Security, are seamlessly and successfully implemented. A high traffic office, each of my staff handles 15 visitors each day, sometimes more. The national average is 11 visitors per day. We offer people a choice and this amazing technology helps us better serve the public and reduce incorrect payments.

During my career with the SSA, the agency has successfully evolved from a paper driven to a technology driven electronic controlled environment. What I remember most, however, is the satisfaction that I still experience – serving the public. I guess that is why my intention to work at SSA for one year became a rewarding career and a primary reason why I am still working at SSA after 44 years.

SSA Historical Events...

1935 Social Security Act signed into law.

1937 Workers began to acquire credits toward old-age insurance benefits. First benefits applications filed.

1937 First Social Security benefits paid.

1939 Social Security Board made part of the newly established Federal Security Agency.

1939 Social Security Amendments broadened the program to include dependents' and survivors' benefits.

1940 Monthly benefits first became payable. Ida May Fuller became the first person to receive benefit check.

1945 Pre-paid medical insurance plan proposed for all people through Social Security system.

1946 Social Security Board was abolished and the Social Security Administration was established.

1950 Social Security Amendments signed.

1954 Social Security Amendments established a "freeze", preventing erosion of disabled workers' benefits.

1956 Amendments provide monthly benefits to disabled workers age 50 to 64 and adult children of deceased or retired workers if disabled before age 18.

1961 The Social Security Amendments of 1961 were signed permitting reduced retirement at age 62.

1965 Medicare bill signed.

1969 Federal Coal Mine Health and Safety Act signed.

1972 PL 92 – 336 signed; authorizing 20% cost-of-living adjustment, automatic annual COLAs in 1975.

1972 Supplemental Security Income program created.

1974 SSI program went into operation.

1977 Health Care Financing Administration created to manage the Medicare program.

1979 SSA Changes from quarterly reporting of wages on paper listings to Annual Wage Reporting on Form W-2.

1980 Social Security Amendments of 1980 signed. Provisions included greater work incentives for disabled Social Security and SSI beneficiaries.

1981 Student benefits phased out, stopping young parents benefits when a child reaches 16, limiting lump sum death payment and minimum benefit changes.

1982 Systems Modernization Plan published. HHS Secretary announces $470 million to modernize SSA data processing system.

1983 National Commission on Social Security Reform sends recommendations for resolving the Social Security program's financial problems to the President and Congress. Social Security Amendments of 1983 signed.

1984 Disability Benefits Reform Act of 1984 signed.

1986 Social Security coverage for federal employees hired after December 31, 1983 established.

1988 SSA's first strategic plan published. Nationwide 800 number implemented.

1990 Supreme Court holds SSI regulation on disability for children inconsistent with Social Security Act. 1994 May - SSA's Internet site was launched.

1995 SSA's first General Business Plan published. SSA becomes an independent agency.

1996 SSA launches its IVT System. SSA awards IWS/LAN contract to Unisys. SSA receives "Best in Class" award for PEBES.

1997 SSA implements online access to INS SAVE. Work eligibility pilot begins..

1998 Pilot 800 number launched. SSA's computer systems fully Y2K compliant. First ever White House Conference on Social Security held.

1999 Electronic Death Registration process begins. SSA begins mailing Social Security Statements to workers 25 years and older. "Ticket to Work" and Work Incentives Improvement Act of 1999 signed.

2000 SSA's Internet reaches #10 on most frequently visited federal government sites. Electronic Retirement Planner launched. Earnings test for beneficiaries at/above retirement age eliminated. $35 million in supplemental funding to upgrade personal computers awarded. Replacement Medicare card online launched. SSA's first live Internet Webcast conducted. Release of SSA's "2010 Vision" document, "computers for Kids" campaign launched, Inmate Project receives Government Technology Leadership Award. Online Benefits Planner now includes information on disability and survivor benefits. New online retirement claims made available.

2002 SSA announces "eVital" project to provide online verification of birth and death information.

2003 SSA releases new Agency Strategic Plan. One-million mark in Internet-received inquires. Electronic newsletter becomes third-largest in the world.

2005 First online applications for help in meeting prescription drug costs under Medicare taken. Regulation proposed to facilitate processing of Social Security and SSI disability claims by improving the disability determination process.

2007 Quick disability process extended to State DDS's. One-millionth online claim for benefits taken. First "baby boomer" files for retirement online.

2008 SSA's Online Retirement Estimator launches. Oct - 20th anniversary of SSA's 800-number.

2009 SSA's IT Vision is released. ARRA funds approved to replace aging NCC.

2010 Open Government portal launched. Presence established on Facebook, Twitter, YouTube. Online application for Medicare is launched. Online appointments scheduling launched. Spanish retirement estimator launched.
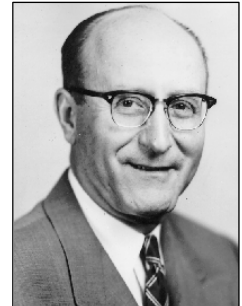
SSA Commissioners...

Arthur J. Altmeyer
July, 1946 – April, 1953

William L. Mitchell (Acting)
April, 1953 - November, 1953

John W. Tramburg
November, 1953 - July, 1954

Charles I. Schottland
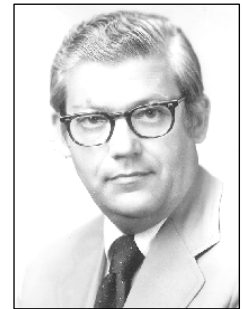August, 1954 - December, 1958

William L. Mitchell
February, 1959 - April, 1962

Robert M. Ball
April, 1962 - March, 1973

Arthur E. Hess (Acting)
March, 1973 - October, 1973
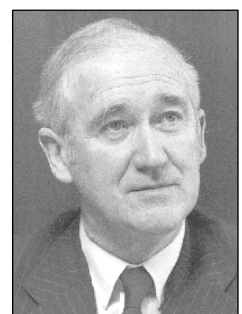
James B. Cardwell
October, 1973 - December, 1977

Don I. Wortman (Acting)
December, 1977 - October, 1978

Stanford G. Ross
October, 1978 - December, 1979

Herbert R. Doggette (Acting)
January, 1980 - January, 1980

William J. Driver
January, 1980 - January, 1981

Herbert R. Doggette (Acting)
January, 1981 - May, 1981

John A. Svahn
May, 1981 - September, 1983

Martha A. McSteen (Acting)
September, 1983 - June, 1986
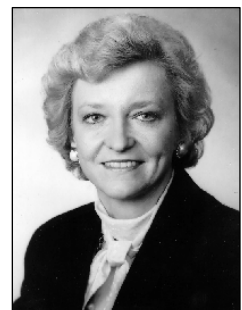
Dorcas R. Hardy
June, 1986 - July, 1989

Gwendolyn S. King
August, 1989 - September, 1992
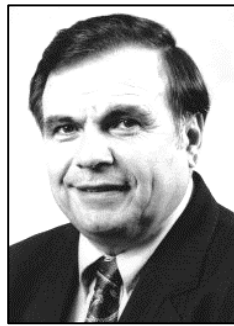
Louis D. Enoff (Acting)
October, 1992 - July, 1993

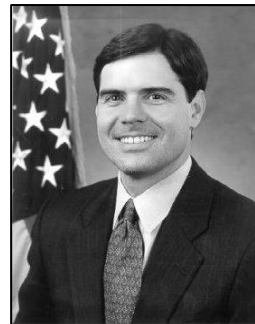**Lawrence H. Thompson (Acting)**
July, 1993 - October, 1993

Shirley S. Chater
October, 1993 - February, 1997

John J. Callahan (Acting)
March, 1997 - September, 1997

Kenneth S. Apfel
September, 1997 - January, 2001

William A. Halter (Acting)
January, 2001 - March, 2001

Larry G. Massanari (Acting)
March, 2001 - November, 2001

Jo Anne B. Barnhart
November, 2001 – January, 2007

Linda S. McMahon (Acting)
January, 2007 – February, 2007

Michael J. Astrue
February, 2007 – February, 2013

Carolyn W. Colvin (Acting)
February, 2013 - Present

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